SOCIAL RE-CONSTRUCTION AND MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER ROLES IN POPULAR CINEMA: A STUDY OF SELECT HINDI AND BENGALI FILMS

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Certificate

I hereby declare that the short synopsis **"Social Re-Construction and Mainstreaming of Gender Roles in Popular Cinema: A Study of Select Hindi and Bengali Films"** being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism and Mass communication under the Faculty of Media Studies and Humanities of Manav Rachna International Institute of Research & Studies, Faridabad during the academic year 2018. It is a bonafide record of original work carried out under the supervision of Dr. MANISHA RATHAUR and has not been submitted in full or part to any other university or institute for degree or diploma. Further, it is certified that the short synopsis is plagiarism free and the proof has been submitted.

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ABSTRACT

The most popular art form for more than 100 years now in India has been the cinema. The work of film turns out to be progressively significant in a nation like India, where the specialty of stalking/attacking somebody you appreciate is aimlessly trailed by individuals as a motivation taken from films, where women are typified as food things, where men are consistently the problem solver and third gender characters are consistently for entertainment, what appears on-screen is note-worthy But there is a visible change in the way gender(s) role is shown on screen now. With the coming of globalization, the new-age directors, with their precision and talent, are mainstreaming gender in films with reversed gender roles and thereby, questioning the prevailing social constructs.

The following research shall talk about analyzing the shift in the construction of gender in popular Indian Cinema from 2010, with a focus on the Hindi and Bengali cinema, and also evaluate the reasons behind this shift. A total of eleven films selected from the period of 2010 to 2020 will be interpreted. With a descriptive research design guiding this research, Theory Triangulation shall act as a foundation on which the research rests, which shall help in checking the validity of more than one theory.

Key-words: Social Constructionism, Indian Cinema, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender roles, Third Gender

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INTRODUCTION

What a man, a woman, or even a third gender person does in real life and how they are shown on any media platform, is light-years apart. Since media is a part and parcel of everyday life, it can build notions and influence their audience with their own biases on the world around them. One such media platform that this study shall delve into is cinema since it has the competence to show what is “socially acceptable”. Focusing broadly on Indian Cinema, the problem that will be brought forth with this study shall concern the portrayal of gender and the subsequent changes in their roles depicted in select Hindi and Bengali films.

It has been more than a hundred years now that Indian cinema has been alive and in business. Being enchanted by the movies hasn’t dwindled even for once, for a nation of one billion Indians. Raja Harishchandra, the first Indian motion picture was released in India in 1913, marking the start of an undying art form for years to come. As rightly put by Yves Thoraval, author of ‘The Cinemas of India’ on the first premier of the first Indian movie, “The Indians showed immediate enthusiasm for this exciting novelty"

India produces more films across all regions than all of Holly-wood. It continues to be in the dominant position with more than 1000 films being made every year. Indian cinema is comprised of films from all over the country and not just Bolly-wood. When it began in the 1910s, it took the help of mythologies and religious texts for content and storyline. Right after independence, the 1930s & 40’s focused on socialist themes like fighting poverty and helping the marginalized however as we move forward, we see the 1960’s flooded with the global touch of hippy culture and westernization(Tilak, 2012). The ’70s &’80s saw the advent of the megastar formula. Actors like Rajesh Khanna, Amitabh Bachchan, Rajnikanth, Uttam Kumar, Prosenjit Chatterjee, etc, became icons, glorifying and immortalizing the roles they played on screen.

In these years, Indian Cinema has designed the changing milieu of India to a degree that no former artistic expression would ever accomplish. Along these lines, the work of film turns out to be progressively significant in a nation like India, where the specialty of stalking/attacking somebody, you appreciate is aimlessly trailed by individuals as a motivation taken from films, where women are typified as food things, where men are consistently the problem solver and third gender characters are consistently for entertainment, what appears on-screen is note-worthy (Sengupta, 2019). This has been additionally clarified

in Cultivation Theory which establishes the framework for comprehending audience viewpoint of how gender is depicted in a film. Cultivation Theory additionally uncovers that portrayals in the media influence audience's understanding of the real world (Murphy, 2015).

Nevertheless, the industry has not stopped experimenting to make better films. There has been a visible shift in the paradigm of Indian cinema concerning content. It is especially interesting considering the political implications connected to the subject "gender". For example, the rise of women's rights, decriminalization of adult consensual same-sex relationships in the Section 377 judgment, etc. has affected gender representation in movies.

Gender Mainstreaming and Indian Cinema

Since the inception of Indian cinema, the depiction of gender on screen has been stereotypical and instrumental in making people believe what role does an 'ideal man', 'ideal woman', and an 'ideal third gender person' plays. Films have time and again tried to prove that man has to be macho, a woman has to be selfless and a trans-person has to be comical. Thus, the gender roles portrayed on screen all these years can be put briefly as –

1. **Ideal Man** – Indian movies have constantly depicted male characters as plainly strong and that don't have any feelings, with just a couple of exemptions. The pattern still proceeds with films like 'Dabangg', Singham, Rowdy Rathore, Kabir Singh. Customarily, masculinity has been spoken of in the films as manly characters with no feminine characteristics. 'Mard ko dard nahi hota' the popular discourse from the film Mard (1985) is at the top edge of such depiction (Paul, 2018). They cannot cry because they do not have emotions, they only have anger and the quest to achieve something violently. They have always been the problem solver and the bread-winner.
2. **Ideal Woman** – She doesn't have her independent presence and her character all through the film is explored corresponding to the male character. In the action movies promoted by the likes of Kumar's, Khan's, and Deol's; the heroine is put as a romantic angle as a way of escapism for the audience from repetitive scenes of violence. The female character is quiet, domestic, modest, respectable, and perfect or she is outrageous, irresponsible, and belittling other women. They have also been shown to be physically mediocre compared to men and also far from being intellectual. She has to be selfless and should always put her husband and family as the topmost priority

and then if they permit, pursue her dream. These depictions show an everlasting difference between the reality of women and ultimately what is portrayed in cinema.

3. **Ideal Third Gender** – They have been given screen space with characters but their portrayal has always been a generalized one. The commonest kind of depiction is building their character through comics and ridicule. They are shown as cartoons, carrying on with poverty and showing up in the scene just to dance or beg at some event, setting the scene for the audience to laugh, reassuring the viewers of their work in real society. They have also been depicted as villains who are engaged in prostitution or pimping and in stealing youngsters to enroll them into their groups.

However, all through these years, the type of gender roles shown on screen has been questioned a lot. While some have resorted to the age-old stereotypes of gender portrayal, some made an effort to portray them realistically. The years post 2000 have been witnessing the box office success of small budget Indian movies and the ascent of male, female, and third gender characters on-screen who don't comply with conventional gender conduct. There has been a constant shift in the camera's focus from viewing characters just as a mere body to viewing them as individual identities with some strong personality traits to them. Contemporary cinema regularly attempts to explore the 'not to be talked about' subjects and simultaneously depicts real gender issues.

Particularly established in the Platform for Action, acknowledged at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing (China) in 1995, bringing gender issues into the mainstream society, additionally named as gender mainstreaming is viewed as an overall procedure for propelling gender equality. It featured the necessity to ensure that gender equality is an important objective in the area of social, cultural, and economic advancement(International Labour Organization). Since cinema has been the one to overlook gender issues and give rise to stereotypical images of gender all these years, what can be a more suitable platform to propagate gender equality as well as reach the masses than the cinema! And that's all within its cinematic power.

Gender Mainstreaming is a worldwide acknowledged concept for advancing gender equality. A definitive objective of mainstreaming is to accomplish gender parity. As an idea, characterized by United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), a gender perception being Mainstreamed is the way toward evaluating the suggestions for women and men of any arranged activity, including legislations, approaches, or projects, in any zone and

whatsoever levels., with the goal that women and men advantage equally, and imbalance isn't sustained. (International Labour Organization)

As this research discusses Indian film at large, it's necessary to gauge the link between gender mainstreaming and Indian cinema, as to how to impart the nitty-grittys of gender issues to the masses. Gender mainstreaming in film ensures that correct gender depiction and propagation of gender issues are the central purposes of the films(Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, 2001).

Media messages have time and again set social norms and reassured that the prevailing social constructs are correct. However, in present times, there have been bouquets of films that are questioning the prevailing social constructs and are trying to create a new social construct through their content, changing the way gender roles have been known and are depicted. This leads to the fundamental basis of this study i.e. social constructionism that establishes that audiences' understanding and perception of the world is ever-evolving. This, in turn, means that the content of the films question the prevailing social constructs and eventually help in forming new social constructs, which fulfill the purpose of gender mainstreaming.

As per Shoojit Sircar, director of Vicky Donor, Indian film is inviting genuine and new roles in place of the generalized portrayal of a character. Contemporary films have endeavored to investigate out of bound subjects like sexuality, same-gender relations, surrogacy, divorce, live-in relations, and so forth. Movies like No One Killed Jessica (2011), Cheeni Kum (2007), Chameli (2003), etc have worked on taboo topics and their narrative remains incomplete without a woman. Path-breaking films like Daayra (1996), Queens! Destiny of Dance (2011), Shabnam Mausi (2005), etc has explored the dynamics of a third gender character as opposed to prevailing stereotypes.

According to Professor of film at St Xavier's College, Kolkata, Gopalan Mullik, a new range of young actors are being nurtured now - the likes of Ayushmann Khurrana, Vicky Kaushal, Rajkummar Rao. They are far away from the male macho pictures of the past age of Bollywood's ideal strong hero. He further pursues that this new bouquet of heroes has a lot of feminine characters in them making them more relatable to the audience, leading to a real depiction of gender (Bhattacharjee, 2019).

Relevantly put by K V Anand, a national honor-winning director, the purpose behind this is as Indian audiences have grasped globalization, its film too had adjusted to the developing

requirement for various plots, more gender-balanced characters, and contemporary storylines.(Tilak, 2012).

Globalization and Indian Cinema

Globalization is a way to connect different parts of the world, leading to interaction and integration among them. The influx of globalization in India in the 1990s metamorphosed the whole film business. It unlocked the rusty locks and opened the gates to a whole new world, enabling the films to get released worldwide, thus leading to an amazing exchange of content, ideas, technology, and stories. The impact globalization had on the quality of content and stories shown on screen was hugely positive because of:

1. The demand and the urge to watch more films and to have an option to choose from a variety of films gave rise to the culture of the multiplex. According to PVRs' chief of strategy Kamal Gianchandani, people had the urge to watch films but they were not satisfied with the ambiance and the facilities that single-screen theatre provided, and thus their inclination towards Multiplexes was justified. It gave them the power to choose from various showtimes and movies(Mathur, 2016). As per a report by FICCI-KPMG (2015), as soon as the directors began to understand that there are crowds for unique and story-driven films, the range of films being shown on-screen changed and increased. This opportunity was intelligently used by the multiplexes as now they had the monopoly to screen movies different from the commercial ones, leading to more foot-fall. Earlier, these films having a particular set of audiences were termed as art-house cinema and not many single-screen theatres wanted to screen them. Thus, leading to a more content-inclusive screening of films.
2. Another important factor that changed the face of the industry is Digitization. It helped cinema in reaching a larger audience. While 2005 saw some underlying indications of digital conveyance in India with a ray of You-tube leading the pack, it was distinctly in 2009 when it picked up speed with other streaming platforms coming in, for example, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hotstar, AltBalaji, Hoichoi, etc to name a few (CARE Ratings Ltd, 2019). They revolutionized the film content altogether. Since there is no fear of scissors being used to cut out scenes from their pieces, it easier for directors to show what they want to show and to not follow the age-old algorithm of making a film. Moreover, India being a youth country, more than half of

its population is glued to the screens every-day, it's imperative to show content which they can relate to.

3. With the entrance of globalization, it carried with it new talents. Indian cinema presently is full of new directors and artists. Many of them don't have any association with any film family, which is an extremely knit entryway to the industry. women directors like Reema Kagti, Zoya Akhtar, Aparna Sen, Gauri Shinde, and so forth are ensuring female voices are heard in Indian film and the likes of Anurag Kashyap, Vishal Bhardwaj, Shoojit Sircar are making motion pictures that are tense, practical.(Tilak, 2012).

The well-known Bollywood format from the 1980s to 2000 was enormous and flat. Heroes were macho, heroines gullible, and villains scoffing and dangerous. But now, it is experimental, and concentrating more on breaking the generalizations of gender depicted on screen. In this study, an analysis of eleven Indian films will be mapped to uncover how representations of all the genders are discursively produced and maintained in India.

In the context of this study, the variables in research shall be treated and defined until the end of the concerned study, in the following manner. Thus, the working definitions are: -

Gender Mainstreaming –Here it means that gender portrayal on screen is equal and is opposed to the stereotypes of gender and by gender, the study means, Men, Women, and Third Gender.

Popular Indian Cinema – Films which have made a good amount of money suggesting good footfall in the theatres and acceptance of the film by the people

The main idea of this research is attempting to see how gender roles have changed in movies by qualitatively applying the theories of social constructivism, gender mainstreaming, and cultivation theory.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study's main concern will be the portrayal of gender or the discourse of gender. Since cinema holds a major part of people's daily life, it consciously or subconsciously affects how individuals see themselves and the world. Now the question arises that with such popularity, for such a long time, how it has paved the way for their neutral presentation of gender roles. In light of previous researches in the area of gender studies concentrating on cinema, it has been contended that men, women are seen separately, and this view continues to stay within various movies in terms of their depiction.

Studies concerning gender roles in a cinema show that the portrayal of women in films is very different from that of men and is even often underrepresented. In her book Gender Trouble, Judith Butler talks about gender as a gained social classification, which builds up her case that gender identity isn't an indication of natural embodiment but instead the result of activities and behavior, that is performance. At the end of the day, Butler contends that regular activity, discourses, expressions, emotions and portrayals, clothing standards, and behavior, as well as some specific preclusions and taboos all, work to create what is seen as a basic masculine or feminine identity.(Butler, 1990)

While men, in general, are depicted as having never-ending professional status, women are shown to have a shorter career span. (Carter & Steiner 2004) Laura Mulvey in her book "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" examines Hollywood films, utilizing a psychoanalytical methodology, as having a male-centric viewpoint that indicates the effect of a male-centric culture on films. She acknowledges that women are depicted as symbols just for the pleasure factor of men. (Mulvey, 1999)Even though gender suggests that all the forms of gender are of concern, it is uncommon to have them discussed simultaneously. Seconding this statement research on stereotypical Characterization of Men in Bollywood Cinema: A study on Gender Performativity contends that the idea of a strong male character and other ensuing ideas that 'men don't cry' is generally propagated by Bollywood. As such, there is almost no degree for feminine characteristics in the male characters as represented by the same. The paper presumes that there is a presence of socially developed macho-characteristics through the respective media content, which is far from the real world.(Paul, 2018)

Most researches dealing with Gender studies in cinema are pessimistic while discussing a women‘s portrayal, rather than being optimistic. Paper “Subject: Cinema Object: Woman” sheds light on how different are the real women from the reel ones, and whether they improve the portrayal or does it impede the picture more, as a result, separating the audience from these films. (Chatterji, 1998) Shaik & Azam in their paper, A Psycho-social Perspective of Gender Role of Then and Now Leading Ladies of Hindi Cinema comprehend the gender role of the leading actresses of Hindi film as far as their depiction onscreen is concerned. The research attempts to address the development growth of the roles of Hindi film female protagonist as well as an antagonist from a psychosocial perspective of gender role generalization much like the proposed research. It also examines the level of the audience's acknowledgment of contemporary gender portrayals. And further concludes that Film is surely an actual impression of society thereby affecting individuals' opinions and decisions. (Shaikh & Azam, 2016)“Deconstructing Gender Roles in Bollywood Films: Through women’s Empowerment Development Discourse study” directs a remarkable report by assessing and deconstructing gender roles in Bollywood films through discourses on women empowerment. All things considered, this examination confirmed the popular view that gender roles in Bollywood films are cliché, with next to no exceptions. (RAZA, 2015)

It is very rare to find studies discussing the portrayal of men in cinema and even if it is there, it is not discussed to the same length as that of a woman. The same applies to third-gender people. Introduction: Perceptions of masculinity and challenges to the Indian male essays how studying masculinity from the gender and queer studies approach give knowledge about power relations, portrayal issues, and nationalist motive within the backdrop of cultural complexity. It further concludes that masculinity cannot be interpreted without recognizing the intersectionality among masculine, women, and queer studies. (Introduction: Perceptions of masculinity and challenges to the Indian male, 2013)

Having the power to show what is socially acceptable and worthy; Cinema becomes an important area of discourse. An article Depiction of Gender Roles and Sexuality in Indian Cinema expresses that there is a strong association between the anecdotal world depicted in films and the reality of Indian culture. There is additionally adequate evidence as to the effect films have on individuals' attitudes concerning behavior and gender. The examination presumes that it is critical to take a gander at a phenomenon from the eyes of a director and attempt to give numerous narratives within the talk, as different viewpoints give the audience

a reasonable perspective of the real world and further make their understanding. (Javalgekar, 2012)

After reviewing the literature, it has been noticed although gender studies imply that gender concerns every single form of gender, they are rarely discussed at the same time. This study shall try to fill this gap in the research by studying the representation of all three forms of gender – men, women, and third; and the change in their gender roles. The general aim of this study is to add to the existing body of work by studying gender portrayals and the roles of characters in the selected movies.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC

The field of Gender study is perpetually extending and thus becomes principal for many reasons. There are three sets of people described in the characteristics below:

1. Gullible, doubtful, fearful, sorrowful, melodramatic
2. Strong, breadwinner, decision-maker, fighter, fearless, situation handler, winner at life always, macho
3. Clumsy, farce, just for comic relief

Indian cinema over all these years has skillfully and stealthily induced the stereotypes of gender roles in the minds of people in such a way that when we read the above-mentioned sets of characteristics we can immediately figure out that the first is of a woman, the second is of a man and the third, though can be of a woman but it resonates more with a person representing LGBTQ community. According to a study, the human brain has an amazing power to retain visual cues to remember information. So imagine the effect of 100 plus years of the amalgamated effect of constant stereotyping and generalizing the gender roles with supporting audio and visuals, will have on people's minds and opinions.

In 1991, when India finally opened up its gate to the outside world, it brought with it a whole bouquet of new ideas, perception, technology, values, talent, and stories. It took almost two-decade for globalization to properly hit its dart on target. The process has been slow but is steady. It accelerated Indian cinema to get past age-old generalizations of gender through many of its new productions. Films today mainly focus on the minds and choices of the youth. More films have taken on the theme of a strong and independent woman, naive and

not-macho man, gay/lesbian relationships, their lives, etc, digressing from the orthodox and type-casted roles that formed the core of most films earlier. Films today do not dither to work on the subjects that were left loose by past films and also play an important role in broadening people's horizons on gender roles. They have started serving the issue of gender as the main course on the mainstream platform, which sometimes back never made it even as a dessert. Broadly, gender mainstreaming means attaining gender equality at all levels, every time. Out of the five principles of gender mainstreaming, one of them deals with using gender-sensitive language which means any form of text should make the genders equally visible(Office for Gender Mainstreaming). It is about time that gender mainstreaming should be the talk of the hour and that it should be used as a catalyst to bring in the change required.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary aim of the proposed study is to understand the application of various types of discourse analysis as well as various theories of representation to see how gender is portrayed in the selected films. The other objectives are: -

1. To explore from the year 2010, the transition in gender depiction in films
2. To analyze the reasons behind this shift
3. To interpret the kind of themes chosen by the Indian film directors and how these themes are responsible for social constructionism
4. To discover the effect of new media on gender mainstreaming

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the characterizing qualities of gender in chosen Indian movies?
2. Has the depiction of gender changed from 2010 to 2020?
3. Have the men, women, and third gender roles in the film explicitly typified?
4. Does cinema state that the existing patriarchal structures are fine or does it remove the shackles and portray all the genders equally?
5. Is gender mainstreaming reflected in the films?
6. With the coming up of digital technology and it further leading to the growth of streaming media platforms, how do they initiate talk on gender sensitivity?
7. How society is accepting this shift in gender representation?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender Mainstreaming in films is ensuring that correct gender depiction and propagation of gender issues are the central proposes of the films. A definitive objective of mainstreaming is to accomplish gender parity. For example, showing that a girl is capable enough for taking care of her old father as well as her own life. Her decisions do not depend on the mercy of any other person.

Now, Cultivation Theory further uncovers these kinds of the neutral portrayal of gender roles in cinema and helps in understanding how these depictions influence the audience's understanding of the real world. Originated by George Gerbner in the 1960s, according to this theory, repeated exposure to media over time influences perceptions of social reality, as well as their beliefs, values, and attitudes.

The fundamental basis of this study is social constructionism. Social constructionism proposes that our understanding and perception of the world are constantly evolving. The ever-evolving world can be constructed through media, and eventually depends on the times and culture it has been constructed in. Now the question arises, why this study shall delve into the issue of gender portrayal in films under a social constructionism frame? Firstly, gender is both personal and political, and secondly, it is also systemic, regardless of individual belief i.e. one does not have to identify as a sexist to benefit from a sexist system. Sexism and Homophobia have always been built into how a person communicates, for example, using men or their pronouns to highlight every gender.(Tom, 2014)

Talking of gender portrayal in films, the audience will either totally involve themselves in a film or will find themselves disconnected. The level of engagement varies. There is not a perfect relation between the audience and the characters of a film; it is subjective as suggested by Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure. However, the presence of some visual cues generated by the prevailing social constructs factors their engagement. For example, what the audience’s opinion of normal is or how do they think about and connect to gender, gender roles, identities, etc. Is the real world accurately depicted in the film? An interpretation of a cue drastically changes the meaning of a film. For example, the meaning of love and hate depends on what meaning of love and hate is normal and acceptable for society.(Tom, 2014)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study shall qualitatively investigate how gender is portrayed in the selected films. The qualitative research method is vital for examining any text. It helps in digging deeper into the issue which leads us to the fact that the choicest type of research design for this study is described as the study aims to describe and discuss how the three genders are represented in the selected films.(Cheng & Ottosson, 2012)

Theory Triangulation

Triangulation shall be used for this particular research. Triangulation means re-confirmation / cross verification of data from more than two sources. Moreover, it also helps in deepening and widening the understanding of the topic and map out its nitty-gritty's.

There are four basic types of triangulation – Data, Investigator, Theory, and Methodological. In this study, the researcher shall take into account Theory Triangulation which means taking the help of more than one theoretical aspect for understanding and analyzing any fact. (Denzin, Norman, Yvonnas, & Lincoln, 2005).

The fundamental basis of this study is one of the first theories to be used i.e. Social Constructionism. It proposes that our understanding and perception of the world are constantly evolving. The ever-evolving world can be constructed through media, and eventually depends on the times and culture it has been constructed in. Furthermore, it talks about two approaches that are especially concerned with studying gender portrayal and those approaches are the semiotic approach and the discourse approach; these have been further discussed in data collection (Hall 1997, p. 15).

The second theory, i.e., Gender Mainstreaming establishes that gender parity is well maintained in cinema and further in the way characters are shown and the third theory, i.e., Cultivation Theory additionally uncovers those portrayals in the media influence audience's understanding of the real world (Murphy, 2015).

Data Collection:

We will not verify or falsify any theory, but simply map how gender representations take place in cinema. The collection of data is dependent on watching the selected films and simultaneously making notes. With the purpose of data collection, the discourse analysis method for analyzing the selected films has been selected. One reason why we accept that discourse analysis is the best decision is that as recently referenced, it is one of the techniques utilized by past analysts within this field and is the most appropriate method to map the research questions.(Cheng & Ottosson, 2012)

The study shall encompass narrative analyses and interpret 11 films keeping in mind some parameters such as the connotative and denotative meaning of the image, gaze, symbols, themes, editing, visual style- mise-en-scène (setting, color and lighting, costume and makeup, props, actor performance, and movement), and narrative style of the films. After this Semiotic analysis will be done to recheck the signs and symbols used in the films. Breaking down these images and words to their most fundamental parts shall make it easy to understand and analyze a film's narrative.

Whilst, the secondary sources include existing writings such as books, research papers, popular articles, film reviews, and other materials in a film magazine, as well as writings on culture and gender studies – theoretical and specific contributions to Indian society.

For making the analysis simple and organized, the process of analyzing the films shall be coded. Not only will it help in concluding but also improve results. The following template shall be put into use for the same:(Cheng & Ottosson, 2012)

Tentative template to be used for coding: -

Timeframe of a scene: x: xx: xx - x: xx: xx

About the scene: events etc

Characters: name1, name2, ….

Analysis: Analyzing the characters based on parameters

Films for Study

This study focuses on eleven films of Hindi and Bengali language which have been made by Indian directors. The mentioned languages have been taken into consideration as,

- Firstly, there always has been a connection among both the film industry since the inception of cinema in India, as the studios were mostly owned by Bengali's and eventually, they provided a lot of work to the Hindi speaking artists
- Secondly, Hindi cinema has benefitted from Bengali cinema a lot, there have been many films as well as popular songs remade and released in Hindi
- Thirdly, to understand a film it is mandatory to be fluent in a language, and therefore being adept in both languages, it will be easy for the researcher to understand and analyze films.

To choose the right films for the study, the following criterion has been adopted:

- Critically acclaimed with prestigious awards to their credit
- Have been a hit film in their times suggesting the audience loved the film
- Film posters of the selected ones are very different from the usual ones, we see more of a woman and third gender presence on them than only men
- Films have in their ways tried to question the prevailing stereotypical gender roles and therefore are moving towards social constructionism

Considering the above-mentioned criteria and since they have been selected according to the needs of the study, purposive sampling was employed to select films. The timeframe taken is 10 years, from 2010-2020 – 2010 because this was the year when new-age filmmakers began multiplying into the business with new thoughts and ideas. These were educated ones, who have studied film and comprehend western film sensitivities. They came in with increasingly more gender-neutral movies and released them in mainstream cinema and not made its reach restricted under the mark of a parallel film so an ever-increasing number of people can watch and be informed and 2020 because it will help in comprehension and clarifying the shift in the decade that went and help to comprehend if gender mainstreaming is a piece of social cognizance of new-age individuals.

From each year, one representative film, either Hindi or Bengali is chosen, across a range of genres. These are:

Table 1 – Films selected for study

YEAR OF RELEASE	FILM NAME	DIRECTOR
2010	AREKTI PREMER GOLPO	RITUPARNO GOSH, KAUSHIK GANGULY
2011	NO ONE KILLED JESSICA	RAJ KUMAR GUPTA
2012	CHITRANGADA	RITUPARNO GHOSH
2013	GOYNAR BAKSHO	APARNA SEN
2014	QUEEN	VIKAS BAHL
2015	PIKU	SHOOJIT SIRCAR
2016	DEAR ZINDAGI	GAURI SINDE
2017	NAGARKIRTAN	KAUSHIK GANGULY
2018	AHARE MON	PRATIM DASGUPTA
2019	DREAM GIRL	RAAJ SHAANDILYAA
2020	PANGA	ASHWINY IYER TIWARI

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Cinema is indeed an impactful medium. There is no second thought in holding it accountable for shaping a person's opinion or viewpoint on something. In our country, specifically, a person learns more from a cinema than from a book, making it all the more important to re-think and ponder on what is and should be shown on screen. The effect cinema has is huge in the sense that we have put labels on gender roles – men work, women are the ideal wife and a

trans-person is a dancer at any celebration. It knowingly/unknowingly affects a million-odd people out there.

There may be hundreds of films propagating the stereotypes of gender but there always has been one or two films choosing the other way and the number has thankfully been increasing day by day. As soon as globalization hit, the barter of ideas, concepts, values, manpower, and cultures among countries took place and we saw new-age directors coming to India with new stories, new technology, new thought, and a new approach to cinema. And, we witness the shift in gender portrayal on-screen – we see trans-people in the shoes of a protagonist, men not being "ideal men" and women not being "ideal women". The proposed study is about exploring this new construction of gender on screen and also analyzing the reasons behind it.

Why the study shall be significant has been listed out in the following points:-

1. The study will further the researches being done in the field of film and gender studies
2. The study will allow one to comprehend a connection among individual perceptions, artistic and technological developments, and social constructs
3. It can assist us with understanding lives and how a society and its culture work.
4. It will help open our eyes to better approaches for understanding, feeling, and pursuing lives.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. To understand the varied nature of gender relations, the research aims at providing a useful perspective from which one can examine aspects of gender mainstreaming
2. Major developments in Indian Cinema with special reference to Indi and Bengali cinema - both in terms of technology and content are gaining acceptance.
3. Cinema lies in understanding the culture it is derived from - hence it is a must to understand the cultural meaning attached to cinematic codes.
4. A major aspect of this study is to have an interpretative understanding of popular Indian cinema

5. How gender mainstreaming in these films are changing the social norms in society

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SOCIAL RE-CONSTRUCTION AND MAINSTREAMING OF GENDER ROLES IN POPULAR CINEMA: A STUDY OF SELECT HINDI AND BENGALI FILMS

SHORT SYNOPSIS

by

MIHIKA SENGUPTA
Registration number:
18/Ph.D/018

Under the supervision of

DR. MANISHA RATHAUR
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,

ABSTRACT

The most popular art form for more than 100 years now in India has been the cinema. The work of film turns out to be progressively significant in a nation like India, where the specialty of stalking/attacking somebody you appreciate is aimlessly trailed by individuals as a motivation taken from films, where women are typified as food things, where men are consistently the problem solver and third gender characters are consistently for entertainment, what appears on-screen is note-worthy But there is a visible change in the way gender(s) role is shown on screen now. With the coming of globalization, the new-age directors, with their precision and talent, are mainstreaming gender in films with reversed gender roles and thereby, questioning the prevailing social constructs.

The following research shall talk about analyzing the shift in the construction of gender in popular Indian Cinema from 2010, with a focus on the Hindi and Bengali cinema, and also evaluate the reasons behind this shift. A total of eleven films selected from the period of 2010 to 2020 will be interpreted. With a descriptive research design guiding this research, Theory Triangulation shall act as a foundation on which the research rests, which shall help in checking the validity of more than one theory.

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